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Kate Craddock

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Training Grounds Editorial

Kate Craddock

Welcome to the Training Grounds section of our special issue on 'Training, Politics and Ideology'. As with every Training Grounds, we aim to provide a space for practitioners to contribute ideas, thoughts and lively provocations. In this special edition of Training Grounds, the majority of the pages are filled with the voices of participants who took part in a Roundtable event hosted by PCI, the School of Performance and Cultural Industries at the University of Leeds. What is presented here is an edited transcript of this event which brought together scholars and practitioners from across the UK to discuss ideas of 'Training in a Cold Climate'. The many voices captured in the transcript offer a range of perspectives on training in the twenty-first century; a time when an undergraduate degree has seemingly become somewhat devalued, yet tuition fees have inevitably set up a host of increasingly challenging student expectations. Other questions raised revolve around a perceived problem of too many conservatoires training too many actors for too few jobs; and questions are posed as to whether or not conservatoires are offering the right kind of training for the many demands of the twenty-first-century performer – someone who is often expected to have many skills and capabilities beyond those offered to them in a very conventional actor training context. The transcript captures the realities of how training as a

concept is introduced throughout the current school education system in England, with practitioners reflecting on their work in school contexts whereby they are invited to contribute to and enhance the formal 'training' received by school pupils working towards GCSE and A Level qualifications. Questions of what exactly these qualifications at every level are training pupils and students for resonate strongly throughout these pages. Rather than attempting to answer any of the questions posed specifically, the transcript offers a fascinating insight into the multiple perspectives and conversations presented at the roundtable event. This Roundtable was hopefully the first of many future events aimed towards bringing the discussions and questions posed on the pages of *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* to life by exploring them through real-world face-to-face dialogue.

Before the Training in a Cold Climate transcript a host of practitioners, theatre makers, producers and scholars were invited to contribute a short manifesto on the 'Future of Theatre'. The responses range from poetic and playful; through to heartfelt and impassioned; through to a questioning of what and who exactly a manifesto might be for in this day and age. The contributors urge us to look backwards at what came before us, always to keep looking forwards and, perhaps most importantly, to ensure we are always looking around and beyond ourselves.